CLAIMS

1. An apparatus for affixing cladding sheets directly to elongated structural members, the sheets having shapeable margin portions; the apparatus comprising:

a batten assembly having a receiver affixed to said structural member for receiving said margin portions and a mating batten for correspondingly engaging said receiver for retaining said margin portions in a locked relation with said structural member; said assembly being substantially co-linear with said structural member; said mating batten being substantially co-planar with said cladding sheets adjacent said structural member;

wherein said batten assembly is spaced from said structural member by at least one standoff stud connected to both said assembly and to said structural member.

2. The apparatus recited in Claim 1 wherein said cladding sheets and said structural members are made of dissimilar metals.

3. The apparatus recited in Claim 1 wherein said dissimilar metals are aluminum and steel.

4. The apparatus recited in Claim 1 wherein said batten assembly extends substantially the entire length of said structural member.

5. The apparatus recited in Claim 1 wherein said batten assembly is made of a material which is substantially non-conductive to electrical energy.

6. The apparatus recited in Claim 1 wherein said batten assembly is substantially non-conductive to thermal energy.

7. An apparatus for cladding elongated structural members having a tubular cross-section; the apparatus comprising:

a batten assembly having a first portion affixed to a radial wall of at least one of said tubular members and a second portion selectively engaging said first portion in at least partial congruent relation to trap cladding therebetween in compressive relation; said batten assembly being configured to be substantially co-planar with said cladding adjacent said at least one tubular member;

wherein said batten assembly is spaced from said structural member by at least one standoff stud connected to both said assembly and to said structural member.

8. The apparatus recited in Claim 7 wherein said batten assembly is made of a material which is substantially non-conductive to electrical energy.

9. The apparatus recited in Claim 7 wherein said batten assembly is substantially non-conductive to thermal energy.

10. A method for cladding elongated structural members; the method comprising the steps of:

a) providing a batten assembly having a batten receiver and a mating batten, the batten receiver having at least one channel for receiving the margin of a cladding sheet, the mating batten having a shoulder that is substantially congruent to said channel;

b) affixing said batten receiver to one said structural member;

c) bending said sheet margin to conform to said channel;

d) placing said sheet margin in said channel so that said cladding sheet will be flush with said batten assembly;

e) trapping said margin in said channel by positioning said shoulder of said mating batten in said channel; and

f) fastening said mating batten to said batten receiver;

wherein step a) comprises the step of making said batten assembly out of a material which is substantially non-conductive to at least one of thermal and electrical energy.

11. The method recited in Claim 10 wherein step b) comprises the step of connecting said receiver to said one structural member by using a standoff stud to space said receiver from said structural member.